

## News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month**

# **First Lady, Missouri Women's Council Encourage Early Detection, Regular Screenings in Fight Against Breast Cancer**

**JEFFERSON CITY**— The statistics are staggering.

One woman in eight either has or will develop breast cancer in her lifetime. This year alone, more than 211,000 women and 1,600 men in America will be diagnosed with breast cancer. Of those diagnosed, 43,300 women and 400 men will die from the disease.

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, a month dedicated to increasing awareness of the importance of early breast cancer detection. The Missouri Women's Council is doing its part to raise awareness about breast cancer and ensure mammography screening becomes a part of every Missouri woman's routine health care.

First Lady Melanie Blunt, who like many Missouri families has had her family touched by breast cancer, stresses early detection as the best defense against the disease and regular mammogram screenings remain the most effective way to identify the disease at its earliest and most treatable stages.

"Breast cancer is a real threat that can impact each of us," Blunt said. "The most important message I can send about breast cancer is the importance of early detection and the crucial role we all play in our own health."

"I have focused on women's and children's wellness and have had the opportunity to hear from women about their struggles with breast cancer. I am always inspired and in awe of their stories and reminded again and again the importance of early detection to fight the disease. I encourage you to take time for breast cancer screenings, including regular self exams, clinical exams and mammograms."

In the Show Me State, the Missouri Women's Council coordinates efforts to promote breast cancer awareness and raises funds solely for providing early detection services for uninsured or under-insured women in Missouri.

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The Council raises funds through donations for the Breast Cancer Awareness License Plate, better known as the Pink Plate, which was implemented in August 2002. Funds raised through the sales of these special license plates provide breast cancer services, including but not limited to screening, treatment, staging and follow-up services.

Any Missourian can participate at any time by making a tax-deductible donation of \$25 or more to the Friends of the Missouri Women's Council by sending a check and completed application to: Pink Plate, PO Box 1684, Jefferson City, MO 65102. Applications are available on the Women's Council web site at [www.womenscouncil.org/documents/pinkplate\\_app.doc](http://www.womenscouncil.org/documents/pinkplate_app.doc) or, for more information, call (573) 751-0810 or toll-free at 1-877-426-9284.

The council is housed within the Missouri Department of Economic Development and consists of 15 members including 11 appointed by the governor, two state senators and two state representatives. Created in 1985 to identify and address the issues affecting the economic and employment status of women in the state, the council also acts as a resource and referral center for women and deals with issues ranging from domestic violence to entrepreneurship and advocacy.

The Missouri Women's Council works closely with other agencies and community based organizations to promote the well being of women in Missouri. Located within the Department of Economic Development, the Council was created by statute in 1985 to identify issues affecting the economic and employment status of Missouri women.

As part of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the 15-member Women's Council sponsors the pink breast cancer awareness license plates. Since the plates became available two years ago, more than 300 license plates have been sold and new applications are processed on a daily basis. Funds raised through the sales of the license plates are used to provide breast cancer services to women in Missouri who are uninsured or underinsured.

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